



SIERRA CLUB

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Southeast Group of the Connecticut Chapter

TO: Members of the Appropriations Committee

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

FROM: Molly McKay, Chair

Southeast Group of Connecticut Sierra Club

RE: Land Value Tax bills PSB 379 and PSB 392

I strongly urge you to support the Land Value Tax. This measure accomplishes two important goals of sustainable development, that is development that 1) revitalizes city and town centers and makes them attractive, safe, economically viable places to live while at the same time 2) it helps to preserve open space outside of the urban area.

Right now there is no tax incentive for someone who owns blighted property in a town or city center to improve that property. In fact, the owner is "punished" by the burden of higher taxes if he makes improvements. It's cheaper in the short run to acquire green spaces out in the countryside and build there. But in the long run, this method costs more both economically and in quality of life and environmentally. It's a double loss - city centers, struggling to recreate themselves, can't make progress, and the countryside is paved over.

The ripple effect of building further and further out puts huge costs on our society: dependence on the automobile, isolation for those who don't drive, the huge waste of building more infrastructure while existing infrastructure is not put to its full use.

This is enabling legislature that offers carrots and reduces penalties. Check out the success of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and see how they used this tax system to make their city thrive! We will be happy to supply you with information about this.

Molly McKay